

# Center for Natural Lands Management

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## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Preserve Manager – South Coast

Reports to: Regional Preserve Manager – South Coast  
Location: Los Angeles/Ventura County (preserve portfolio near Valencia, CA)  
Position: Permanent / Full-time (1.0 FTE); Exempt (Salaried)  
Compensation: DOE; Benefits



Application deadline: Open until filled, but for fullest consideration, please apply no later than July 6, 2022

### Position Summary and General Duties

The Preserve Manager – South Coast (South Coast PM) will be ultimately responsible for managing a portfolio of several preserves in CNLM's South Coast Region, mostly concentrated in Los Angeles County. The portfolio currently contains one Preserve—Westridge Oak, a 167-acre preserve of valley oak savanna, California annual grassland, and coastal sage scrub within the City of Santa Clarita. In addition to the valley oak component—an increasingly rare vegetation type, this Preserve provides conditions to support the southern California rufous-crowned sparrow. CNLM has a conservation easement and full, perpetual management responsibilities for this Preserve.

In addition to management of Westridge Oak Preserve, initially the South Coast PM will be expected to actively participate in all aspects of CNLM's preserve acquisition process for several new preserves that, when acquired, will comprise over 8,000 acres. The majority of the preserve property will be in Los Angeles County (possibly some in Ventura County) and generally west of Santa Clarita and Interstate 5, with some bordering the Santa Clara River. Currently in contract with the permittee of a large development project, CNLM's preserve acquisitions are anticipated to occur in stages for three general areas. The first area expected to be protected by CNLM is property approximately 5,700 acres in size that stretches from a major ridge in the Santa Susana Mountains down to the Santa Clara River. This area will border large areas of natural lands to the west, south, and east. Much of the northern boundary will border residential development except in the northwest, where it will meet another area to be protected along the Santa Clara River. A trail system is also planned within this area. Major plant communities include coastal sage scrub, mixed chaparral, oak savanna/woodlands, and grassland. Significant numbers of oak trees are present on site as well as several special-status plant species including island mountain mahogany, Southern California black walnut, Parish's big sagebrush, Plummer's Mariposa lily,

slender Mariposa lily, late-flowered Mariposa lily, and Peirson's morning glory. The California horned lizard, a California species of special concern, has also been found on site.

Over time, two other areas will be protected as CNLM preserves – one encompassing approximately five miles of the Santa Clara River and associated floodplain. Special-status species known to occur in that area include the unarmored three-spine stickleback, arroyo chub, Santa Ana sucker, least Bell's vireo, white-tailed kite, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, two-striped garter snake, southwestern pond turtle, and western spadefoot toad. A public trail would also be provided along the northern boundary of the preserve.

The third area to be protected as a CNLM preserve includes a large natural area west of San Martinez Grande Canyon and several of the steeper canyons and ridges adjacent to the Santa Clara River. Plant communities mostly are composed of coastal sage scrub and grassland with localized areas of oak savanna and woodlands. A defining feature of this area is the endangered San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* ssp. *fernandina*). That species will be intensively managed, and management will be informed by considerable previous investment in determining appropriate monitoring and management techniques.

The South Coast PM will be an active member of CNLM's "Valencia Acquisitions Team" that may include, at various times, the General Counsel, Director of Conservation Science and Stewardship, Director of Administration, South Coast Regional Manager, and Central California Regional Manager. Responsibilities will be expressed in diverse activities that could include writing or reviewing draft management plans, conducting site visits of the planned preserve areas, observing and commenting on any current management or monitoring activities, learning and then conducting analyses for long-term management costs using CNLM's "PAR" app, meeting with the permittee and regulatory agencies along with CNLM staff, providing support for coordination of the acquisition, writing reports, and generally helping to ensure that CNLM is well positioned to manage the newly acquired preserve(s).

It is anticipated that, as new preserves are acquired, these will be added to the South Coast PM's portfolio while he/she/they continue to participate in acquisitions. As the portfolio grows, new Preserve Managers will be hired to manage additional preserves and to also participate in acquisitions as long as needed. As such, the South Coast PM has the exciting opportunity to be positioned at the beginning of a major conservation project and to help shape the future of these preserves.

For the Westridge Oak Preserve, and for other preserves as they are acquired, the South Coast PM will be responsible for management at both landscape and population levels. Stewardship activities include occasional restoration or enhancement activities; integrated pest management including chemical control of exotics if needed and/or mechanical control; management of grazing activities; biological monitoring; revising management plans; preparing annual budgets, work plans, and reports; analyzing data

as needed; and active engagement of regulatory agency personnel and other collaborators and contractors needed for specialized services. Any public trails on CNLM's preserves, even if not CNLM's direct responsibility, will require coordination with others and monitoring to ensure compatibility with the protection of the onsite natural resources.

The South Coast PM will provide resource management in accordance with the conservation values and regulatory requirements of the Preserves, CNLM's stewardship standards and practices (which also reflect and exceed Land Trust Accreditation Commission standards), and the preserve-specific management plans. This position requires maintenance of a home office for which CNLM provides a stipend. A company vehicle may be provided at management's discretion. There is a considerable degree of autonomy (and responsibility) associated with this position because of CNLM's organizational structure which focuses on preserve management rather than high levels of administration and supervision. In addition to the management of this portfolio of preserves, the South Coast PM will contribute to CNLM's expertise and documentation of 'best management practices' for managing rare and protected plant and animal species. He/she/they will participate in internal and external stewardship and conservation science events and, as needed, participate in the acquisition of new preserves.

### **About CNLM**

The Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, created in 1990, whose mission is the perpetual stewardship of natural and created conservation lands, sensitive species, and their resident ecosystems. Conservation stewardship activities are practiced on preserves in California, Oregon, and Washington. CNLM currently has a preserve portfolio of over 100 preserves that combined represent more than 75,000 acres of high conservation value.

The majority (>90) of CNLM's preserves are in California, encompassing over 70,000 acres throughout the state, with new preserves added intermittently. The preserves vary in size from three to thousands of acres and are managed under direct ownership, conservation easements, or management contracts. For purposes of organizational structure and oversight, CNLM's California preserves are organized into (currently five) regions: Northern California, Central California, South Coast, Riverside County, and San Diego County.

Central to CNLM's mission and fundamental to its success are the principles of rigorous cost estimation for managing conservation areas in perpetuity and application of appropriate scientific information for conservation and restoration. CNLM staff developed the iconic "PAR" software and made it available (now through subscription to the app) to the conservation community to assist with determination of perpetual stewardship costs. Financial support for CNLM's conservation activities is primarily acquired from earnings on investments (endowments) that are professionally managed. Conservation properties are typically acquired through mitigation processes—as such the properties have been well vetted for conservation value and are accompanied by

perpetual stewardship funding. In addition to its fee title properties, CNLM monitors and defends conservation easements it has been granted over many properties and works collaboratively with natural resource regulatory agencies to protect and maintain conservation values.

CNLM is culturally significant in its focus on rare and vulnerable species, small populations, and sensitive habitats. Such responsibilities require stewardship staff with a strong background in natural sciences, the ability to apply principles from conservation biology with experienced discretion, and a passion for contributing to conservation success through long term, on-the-ground, management. To fulfill its conservation mission, CNLM has a well-established practice of selecting for and investing in excellent staff.

Given the dispersed nature of its preserves throughout California, and in Washington and Oregon, almost all CNLM staff work from home offices—accessing and posting information in a cloud-based system and maintaining core culture through virtual and in-person (when possible) meetings. CNLM currently maintains a small administrative office in Temecula, California.

CNLM offers competitive salary, paid vacation and sick time, and other financial benefits. Most importantly, we offer the opportunity to work with a team of talented and committed conservation professionals and to achieve a legacy of substantial conservation impact.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide stewardship for a portfolio of CNLM South Coast Region preserves including planning, management, enhancement, monitoring, reporting, budgeting, and other activities
- Monitor occurrences and populations of native, listed, and exotic species of plants and animals
- Carry out specific preserve management activities such as vegetation management, maintaining and repairing fences and posting signs, patrolling and enforcement (of easement conditions), and preparing scopes of work and contracts for specific services if required for appropriate stewardship and as allowed by preserve budgets
- Manage grazing as a vegetation management tool, including the conduct of effective communications and relationships with grazing operators, monitoring grazing effects, and drafting appropriate grazing lease agreements
- Review monitoring protocols, analyze and interpret the results of monitoring activities, and incorporate this information into management activities and plans
- Develop and maintain a permanent record of preserve activities, decisions taken, and preserve conditions

- Participate in planning and community meetings as a representative of CNLM and lead outreach as needed – especially with neighboring land owners, police and fire departments, and regulatory and other natural resource agencies and entities, as appropriate
- Manage and engage the public, as needed, especially with respect to use of trails on CNLM preserves
- Prepare and implement annual work plans, budgets, and reports
- Identify any additional (beyond provided budget and work plan) important activities, develop plans, and participate in efforts to acquire additional resources
- Work collaboratively, productively, and professionally with other CNLM staff, natural resources agencies, consultants, and other conservation organizations
- Supervise other CNLM staff (e.g., Rangers) as appropriate and as needed
- Participate in acquiring new CNLM preserves which includes conducting PAR (Property Analysis Record) analyses on new properties and conducting associated field surveys and due diligence as needed
- Fulfill other duties as assigned.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- Master of Science (or Arts) degree (strongly preferred) in Natural Resource Management, Biology, Wildlife Ecology, Range Ecology, Botany, or related field; or compelling evidence of equivalent experience and self-education that would result in understanding of core principles and ability to use statistical, preserve design, ecological, and genetic principles in preserve stewardship and decision-making
- Relevant experience in land stewardship, including application of good management practices, restoration, and management of rare or fragile species; at least three years of such experience is desirable
- Experience in management of coastal sage scrub habitats is desirable
- Strong background—from formal education, experience, or a combination—in ecology, with an emphasis in plant and/or wildlife biology or range management, is highly desirable
- Knowledge—identification, life history characteristics, management—of southern California native plants is highly desirable
- Excellent communication skills; ability to write professional stewardship-related plans, reports, and other documents
- Demonstrated effectiveness in working collaboratively and professionally at public and client meetings

- Proven self-starter, able to work efficiently and effectively with minimal supervision, and able to appropriately use initiative to meet habitat management goals; seeking advice and policy guidance when needed and appropriate
- Able to quickly learn and effectively use the PAR (Property Analysis Record) software, including the due diligence required for proper application of this financial tool
- Able to prepare annual budgets and manage Preserve activities within them
- Able to structure time effectively and meet deadlines
- Ability to operate from a home office, to provide a safe location for a CNLM vehicle if one is provided, and to make efficient use of the limited funds available for transportation in traveling to/from the Preserve and conducting other work-related responsibilities
- Working knowledge of GIS and GPS technologies and associated software and a working knowledge of Windows operating systems and PC applications such as Microsoft Office Suite; familiarity with statistical analyses and associated software is desirable
- Possession and maintenance of a valid driver's license and safe driving record
- Understanding of basic statistical principles for designing monitoring protocols, simple field trials, and analyzing resulting data is highly desirable
- Familiarity with federal, state, and local environmental legislation and codes such as the California and Federal Endangered Species Acts and ability to work with appropriate discretion in a context involving listed species and regulatory requirements
- Possession of US Fish and Wildlife Service permit to monitor any of the listed wildlife species found on the preserves or the ability to quickly acquire the skills and experience that would lead to acquiring such permit is desirable.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

- Regularly required to hike through a variety of habitat types and terrain, walking over uneven ground, climbing over obstacles, and accessing remote locations
- Regularly sits or stands at a desk or computer workstation
- Regularly required to operate a CNLM vehicle to conduct stewardship responsibilities (this may include a 4x4 truck or an all-terrain vehicle (ATV))
- Frequently works in an environment that involves overseeing contractors, working closely with other CNLM staff, managing public involvement, negotiating projects with regulatory agencies and others
- Some evening and weekend responsibilities may be required, including travel (and as can be safely conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic)

- Timing of work may be related to biological windows, fiscal deadlines, Board meetings, legal commitments, or other defining timeframes. As such, periods of heavy workload may occur.
- May involve supervision of other staff and coordination of work with other CNLM staff
- Occasionally may be required to use or supervise the use of pesticides and or other chemical substances
- Occasionally required to use or supervise the use of powered equipment such as weed trimmers and chain saws
- Occasionally lifts, positions, or otherwise moves objects weighing up to 50 pounds.

The working conditions described here are representative in part of those that will be encountered by an employee in this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to successfully function in these working conditions.

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*The above statements are intended to describe the general nature of the work being performed by people assigned to this work. This is not an exhaustive list of all duties and responsibilities. CNLM management reserves the right to amend and change responsibilities to meet business and organizational needs as necessary.*

*CNLM is an Equal Opportunity employer. Personnel are chosen based on ability without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, in accordance with federal and state law.*

*This position description does not constitute an employment agreement between the CNLM and the employee and is subject to change by CNLM as the needs of the CNLM and requirements of the job change.*

**TO APPLY:**

Qualified applicants must provide: a **detailed letter of interest**, a **detailed resumé**, and **two examples** of written communication for which the applicant was the sole or senior author (such as a report or publication).

**Electronic submissions strongly preferred.**

Email these materials to: [careers-spm@cnlm.org](mailto:careers-spm@cnlm.org)

Or mail to: Center for Natural Lands Management  
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